

INAUGURAL ADDRESS*

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It gives me great pleasure to be present here to inaugurate the Twelfth Annual Session of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics. I hardly need emphasise the great service your Society has done in its short life of only twelve years. The annual meetings, symposia and seminars that you conduct, the journal that you publish, and the valuable books like *Sampling Theory and Application to Sample Surveys in Agriculture*, and *Statistical Methods for Agricultural Workers* that you have brought out, have done immense service in promoting research and studies and practical applications in the field of agricultural statistics. The very fact that your Society enjoys the patronage and guidance of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of India, and one of the great scholars and original thinkers the country has produced, bears testimony to the place your organisation holds in the field of application of scientific knowledge in national reconstruction. It is extremely heartening to learn that your journal has stimulated research both within and outside India in statistics and it has earned a place among the best statistical journals of the World. Scientific literature in Hindi, as also in other languages of India, is painfully lacking; and when I find that your journal has a Hindi Supplement, I cannot help praising the foresight and the nationalist spirit its promoters are imbued with. I would very much desire the Society to publish original statistical work and to bring out standard statistical text-books and other literature in Hindi of which there is acute dearth. I understand that your publication, *Sampling Theory and its Application in Agricultural Surveys* has received good appreciation in the international sphere and has been translated into foreign languages. I would earnestly desire to see its Hindi version at an early date.

My friend Shri B. A. Mandloi has brought to our notice the voluminous work that has been done to fill in the gaps in the field of agricultural statistics in this State. Statistics pertaining to almost every branch of agriculture are being built up, but considerable ground

* Address delivered on 28th January 1959 on the occasion of the Twelfth Annual General Meeting of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics at Gwalior.

still remains to be covered. The statistics pertaining to the industries allied to agriculture are still incomplete and rather conjectural. Complete and correct statistics about the earnings of the agricultural and rural labour, their employment position, the extent of unemployment and underemployment prevalent among them, their cost of living and their socio-economic conditions, are also wanting. Similarly the statistics of the cost of production of crops are also not available in the form required. It is felt that the consolidation of holdings leads to increase in cultivated area by eliminating unnecessary bunds, makes irrigation more easy and protection of crops from the ravages of wild and stray animals more effective, augments the yield of crops, and brings forth several other social, communal and agricultural benefits, but factual assessment of the benefits derived has not so far been done. To alleviate the pressure of population on land, to combat seasonal unemployment among the agriculturists and to raise the level of their income and their standard of living, the revival and promotion of India's age-old village crafts and household industries are often recommended. But basic statistics for planning measures to develop the pursuits allied to agriculture are essential. The economics of the allied agricultural industries, the possibilities of their long-term growth on their own strength in the face of competition from the large-scale production units, their competitive strength with the large units in relation to their input-output ratio, their capacity to generate employment, etc., are also necessary. With the diversification of our agricultural economy, our agricultural statisticians and economists should not feel contented with confining their energy and attention merely to the estimation of area and yield of crops or compilation of statistics of rainfall and agricultural prices and wages, but should enlarge the scope of their studies, research and activities to include the entire field of agriculture and the allied pursuits. It is with this comprehensive scope that the development of the organisation for the Agricultural Statistics in any State should be visualised. Agriculture and the industries connected with the processing of primary produce cannot be studied in water-tight compartments and the agricultural statisticians should have an integrated approach and a broad vision.

In recent years I have seen a number of statistical publications brought out in a very attractive get-up and popular style to appeal to the common man, the administrator, the public, the trade and the policy-framers. Graphs and pictures and diagrams are indeed pleasing to the eyes. Such publications are therefore, desirable, so long as our anxiety to popularise statistics does not relegate to a second place

the improvement in reliability, timeliness and comprehensiveness of our statistics which are the major tasks before statisticians. I should also like to point out the possible danger of over-popularisation or over-simplification of statistics, as statistics are thereby liable to degenerate into the proverbial device by which anything can be proved or disproved. It may unwarningly misguide an administrator who in disgust and despair may brand statistics as damned lies as Disraeli once did. I wish to emphasise that our statistical organisations with their increasing staff of trained and qualified statisticians and economists should also collect and compile new types of data to fill in the existing lacunæ and to meet the statistical requirements of planning and evaluation of the achievements and interpret the existing and new data to throw new light on our economy.

Shri Mandloi in his welcome address to you has given an impressive list of improvements effected in the field of agricultural statistics in this State. It is heartening to know the volume of the valuable work that has been done. Statistics in the various fields have been collected either by the census or the complete enumeration method through the agency of primary reporters particularly the patwaris or by the sample survey method through trained Investigators. For obvious reasons the accuracy of the patwari figures has been frequently questioned; and the sample surveys through *ad-hoc* Investigators have often proved expensive. In some of the foreign countries there is no official agency to collect and report statistics to the Government Department and others. The primary producers like farmers, etc., and the manufacturers report the statistics of their business in the form of replies to given questionnaires. The people in India are, of course, not so educated and enlightened and so alive to their responsibilities as their brethren in some more developed foreign countries. But as an experiment we might make a beginning in associating the non-official agency in reporting statistics of the business they are engaged in or are intimately connected with. In the initial stage the response may not be very encouraging. There is no hundred per cent. response even in the most advanced of the foreign countries. I am also aware that the information supplied in the beginning may not be impartial and will have to be accepted with caution. This approach has also a great educational value, as people are trained to maintain accounts and develop an analytical mind in respect of the profit and loss, and planning and execution of their business. A beginning may be made in the Community Project and National Extension Service Blocks where we have extension officers to educate people. In fact, the Directorate of Economics and Statistics

of the Union Ministry of Food and Agriculture has appointed a number of enlightened farmers and their leaders like the Members of Legislative Assemblies and the Members of Parliament as voluntary crop reporters who intimate periodically the condition and prospects of crops in their areas. I also find that the Directorate of Land Records in this State collects the statistics of agricultural prices through the Karmcharis of regulated markets where they are existing and functioning. To begin with, we may prescribe some form for keeping records in which farmers may be persuaded to maintain a record of area and yield of each crop sown for each field together with the quantities of seed, manure and fertiliser used and human, animal and machine labour employed for each operation. They may keep the record of price, age and breed of each cattle together with the amount and price of milk and milk products and other livestock products. A record of the type, quantity and cost of the cattle-feed given to the livestock may also be maintained. The income and expenditure of the farm on various accounts may also be maintained to indicate the variations in farm assets and liabilities.

I am not a Statistician. But as an user of the statistics you furnish, I have made a few suggestions to the Statisticians gathered here today, as you are alive to our day-to-day problems. The subjects that you have chosen for your two symposia are closely connected with our nation-building programmes. I wish your Conference where you propose to exchange ideas and discuss important statistical issues all success and hope that your deliberations will help agricultural statisticians to become better equipped and enlightened to play their role in the momentous task of the national reconstruction we are all engaged in. I also hope that your meetings will focus the attention of the administrators and the public on the very valuable work you are doing and the problems you face.